



Women's rights should not be up for debate - in the House of Commons or anywhere else in Canada.

Yet the federal Conservative government seems to think they are.

This issue of a woman's legal right to safe and accessible abortion services as settled by the Supreme Court in 1988. The only question that still remains is whether women across Canada have the ability to exercise this right. Even today, women in rural settings still do not have adequate access to services – a situation that needs be addressed.

Women and men alike watched in disgust as Conservative MP Stephen Woodworth's motion, supported by a number of his colleagues, called into question the ability of women to make choices over their own bodies. M-312 proposes the creation of a Parliamentary Committee to examine whether the Criminal Code definition of "human being" should be expanded to include fetuses. In effect, the motion opens the door for the criminalization of abortion and the revival of the long concluded debate over women's reproductive rights and autonomy over their own bodies.

Time and time again, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has pledged that the Conservative party would not reopen the abortion debate. Less than a year into a majority government, we see the debate being cracked open by a member of the Conservative caucus.

Since taking office in January 2006, the Conservative government has launched a full out attack on women's rights and equality. But so far nothing has been as offensive as the suggestion that government may infringe on women's rights over their own bodies and freedom of choice.

The CAW stands with the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada and the YWCA's call to uphold women's legal right to abortion and prevent the infringement on women's Charter rights. We will continue to work alongside women's and other progressive organizations across our country to defend women's reproductive and legal rights in the weeks and months ahead.

Stephen Harper, women's reproductive rights are not up for debate. Live up to your word.

Sincerely,

Ken Lewenza
National President

Julie White
Director of Women's Program